

LB  
1631  
M6

UC-NRLF



5B 66 883

YC 56871



GIFT  
NOV 15 915

*Coulter*  
*Coulter*

# REPORT



on the

# Cost and Labor of English Teaching

by a Committee of the

Modern Language Association of America

and the

National Council of Teachers of English



## MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

F. G. HUBBARD,  
University of Wisconsin.

J. M. THOMAS,  
University of Minnesota.

A. B. NOBLE,  
Iowa State College.

H. G. PAUL,  
University of Illinois.

V. C. COULTER,  
Warrensburg Normal School, Mo.

E. M. HOPKINS, Chairman,  
University of Kansas.

DECEMBER, 1913

## EDITIONS

### PRELIMINARY REPORT

Published by the University of Kansas for distribution in Kansas.

Published by the Iowa State Board of Education for distribution in Iowa.

Published by the Illinois Association of Teachers of English for distribution in Illinois.

Distributed in Missouri by the English Department of the University of Missouri.

Published by the English Department of Mississippi A. and M. College for distribution in Mississippi.

Published by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for distribution in Michigan.

Published by the Wisconsin Association of Teachers of English for distribution in Wisconsin.

Published jointly by the English Departments of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mt. Holyoke College, Trinity College, and the Connecticut Agricultural College, for distribution in New England.

### SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

Published by the Illinois Association of Teachers of English for distribution in Illinois.

Published by the English Department of the University of Kansas for distribution in Kansas.

Published by the Wisconsin Association of English Teachers for distribution in Wisconsin.

Distributed in Missouri by the Missouri Society of Teachers of English and Modern Languages.

### COMPLETE EDITION

Published by the State Department of Public Instruction for distribution in Iowa.

Published by the University of Washington for distribution in the State of Washington.

---

Printed by the Department of Journalism Press, University of Kansas. Orders by the hundred, one dollar and seventy-five cents, carriage not prepaid; by the thousand, special rate on application. Single copies five cents postpaid.

# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## SUMMARY.

(This report presents the results of an organized effort to estimate the purely physical and material factors of efficiency in English composition teaching.)

1. English composition is a fundamental and necessary subject in all schools, and is of especial importance in primary and secondary schools.

2. Efficiency of method, as shown by many years of investigation and discussion, is chiefly a matter of laboratory practice and of individual instruction.

3. Under present conditions, the results of English composition teaching in almost all schools are unsatisfactory, and are the subject of general complaint.

4. In composition study, themes and exercises must be written; and the average of efficient practice, stated in average number of words written by a single pupil weekly, is for high schools about 400, for college freshman classes about 650. (See page 6.)

5. Efficiency of method requires that all such manuscript shall be read, criticised, and corrected by the teacher, either orally with the pupil, or in writing. (Pages 6, 7, 8 and 10.)

6. The physical rate, stated in the average number of words an hour, at which an average teacher can carefully read and correct manuscript is for high schools about 2000 and for college freshmen about 2200. (Page 7.)

7. Long continued criticism and correcting of manuscript is one of the severest tests of physical endurance to be found in any teaching, and the limit of full and continued efficiency in it is about two hours a day or ten hours a week. Much more than this results sooner or later in the physical collapse of the teacher. (Page 7.)

8. Under present conditions, the average number of composition pupils assigned to a single teacher is in high schools about 130, in college freshman classes about 105. (Page 8.)

9. To train this number of pupils according to a proper standard of efficiency would require of each teacher for manuscript reading alone, in high schools 26 hours weekly, in colleges 31 hours weekly; or two and one-half times the safe limit of physical endurance. (Page 8.)

10. Under existing conditions, theme reading, the severest part of the composition teacher's labor, is commonly not counted or allowed for in any way in assigning his work. (Page 10.)

11. Under the average of existing conditions it is a physical impossibility by any "method" whatever, for any English composition teacher to bring his work to a proper standard of efficiency. Pages 7, 8, and 21.)

12. In determining the proper duty of an English composition teacher, the standard of measurement should be, not the number of teaching hours, but the number of pupils. (Page 8.)

13. The average number of pupils which a single composition teacher should be able to train, according to a proper standard of efficiency is under average conditions, for high schools about 50, for college freshman classes about 35. Conditions in particular cases may increase or diminish this number. (Page 8.)

14. English composition, usually taught in colleges by the younger and less experienced instructors, should be taught by the best teachers of a department. (Page 11.)

15. Teachers should not teach English composition exclusively. (Page 10.)

16. It is commonly better to employ "theme readers" than to leave themes unread, but the practice seldom maintains a proper standard of efficiency. (Page 11.)

---

## COMMITTEE ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENGLISH

Pursuant to the action of the English Council and of the Bureau of Education (see pages 14 and 23), the committee of six on the labor and cost of high school and college English has been enlarged to fifteen for the study of the conditions, methods, and results of English teaching in elementary schools. At the annual meeting of the Council held in Chicago November 27 to 29, 1913, the committee secured the approval of the Council for its general plan, and the adoption of resolutions requesting colleges and high school accrediting organizations to take action toward establishing a maximum for the number of pupils to be assigned to a single English teacher, in accordance with the conclusions of the present report; conclusions that after three years, and after fifteen editions of the report totaling more than 25,000 copies have been issued, stand unquestioned, besides receiving incidental verification from several related investigations. Various schools and organizations have already taken such action, with eminently satisfactory results; and the Council resolutions are designed to make such action more general. For the text of these resolutions address the secretary of the Council, Professor James F. Hosis, Chicago Teachers' College.

The plan for conducting the inquiry into the English of elementary schools is as follows: Every state or district organization of teachers is asked to appoint a special committee to name as many local sub-committees as possible within its territory and to report the list to the chairman of the central committee named below. Names representing one hundred localities, more or less as may be convenient in each instance, will be sufficient, and the localities may include cities, towns, and county rural schools.. To both state and local committees further instructions will then be sent with reference to the nature and distribution of the questionnaires and the gathering and tabulating of the material. Requests for information may be addressed to the chairman or to any member of the central committee.

Adelaide S. Baylor,  
Department of Public Instruction,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

F. S. Camp,  
William St. School,  
Stamford, Conn.

Superintendent M. G. Clarke,  
Sioux City, Iowa.

V. C. Coulter,  
State Normal School,  
Warrensburg, Mo.

I. E. Goldwasser,  
Public School 62, Intermediate,  
New York, N. Y.

F. G. Hubbard,  
University of Wisconsin.

E. L. Miller,  
Central High School,  
Detroit, Michigan.

Lucy B. Moody,  
Allegheny High School,  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

A. B. Noble,  
Iowa State College.

H. G. Paul,  
University of Illinois.

Asst. Supt. E. D. Roberts,  
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Elisabeth M. Sherman  
Dewey School,  
Oakland, Cal.

O. B. Sperlin,  
Tacoma High School,  
Tacoma, Washington.

J. M. Thomas,  
University of Minnesota.

E. M. Hopkins, Chairman,  
University of Kansas.

# PRELIMINARY REPORT

## GENERAL EXPLANATION

### Status of Committee.

In December, 1909, at a meeting of the English section of the Central Division of the Modern Language Association, held at Iowa City, a committee was appointed to investigate and report at the next meeting of the section upon the conditions of English composition teaching in high schools and in college freshman classes. It was to ascertain if possible the proper amount of theme writing to be required, the best way of dealing with student manuscript, the necessary time, equipment, and number of teachers, and the relation of these data to a proper standard of efficiency. The report was presented at the St. Louis meeting of the Central Division, December 29, 1910, adopted by the section, and recommended for publication. The committee was continued to make further investigation, especially with reference to the comparative cost of the teaching of English and of other secondary school subjects. It made a report of progress at the Chicago meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1911.

### Method of Procedure.

The method of procedure was as follows: Circulars embodying an extended list of specific questions were sent to all the colleges in the United States, and to ten or fifteen of the leading high schools in each state; in all to about eleven hundred schools and colleges. Replies were received from not quite twenty per cent of this number, about evenly divided between colleges and high schools, and representing more than a thousand English teachers. The colleges reporting seem completely representative, and belong to 33 states; the high schools reporting are mostly the larger schools, and represent 25 states. Schools and colleges of the East and the Central West are most largely represented, next in number are the schools of the farther West, and least in number those of the South.

### Number of Schools and English Teachers.

In carrying out its task, the committee had the active aid of many friends besides those who undertook the no small labor of replying to its questionnaire. Replies were received from 96 colleges of 345 English teachers, and from 93 high schools of 552 English teachers. Supplementary high school data were obtained from 122 teachers representing about 30 schools. The total number of English teachers reporting is therefore 1019.

On receipt of replies, the answers to each question were accurately tabulated, and verified by cross reference to related parts of the circular. For all but a few points investigated, the questions were the same for both high schools and colleges; and the answers to these questions, though separately tabulated, are herein presented side by side: afterwards the answers to questions relating to colleges only. Answers to questions of greater importance have been averaged by the number of teachers reporting, to those of less importance by the number of schools reporting. Some answers have been computed by both methods, and in no case has appeared any striking discrepancy between the two sets of results.

### Value of Results.

From the first publication of this report in April of 1911, to the date of this edition of 1912, and after the distribution of twelve thousand copies, no error in it has been indicated save that which was anticipated: that it understates existing evils and the resultant lack of efficiency. Intended to be conservative

in statement, the committee now has reason to believe that it is rather too conservative, but that it is otherwise completely accurate. For an account of work done since April 1911, and a tentative statement of results since arrived at, see pages 13, 14 and 4.

## PRINCIPAL DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION.

### **Is theme-writing necessary in English composition teaching?**

Evidently if this fundamental question can be answered in the negative, this part of the investigation need proceed no farther. But no such report appears in the correspondence of the committee; the vote is unanimous that oral training alone is necessarily insufficient: and the average of opinions is that half the work should be oral and half written.

### **If theme-writing is necessary, how much is there under actual conditions, and how much should there be under ideal conditions?**

The amount actually written under present conditions averages for high schools 380 words a week throughout the year, and for colleges 630 words a week. Ideal conditions would slightly increase these averages to about 430 for high schools and 680 for colleges, and would make possible equal attention to oral and to written training.

### **What ought to be done with this amount of manuscript, and what actually is done with it?**

Various individual suggestions in answer to the first of these questions are discussed on page 9. Some of these are more commonly offered by those who are not themselves teachers of English composition. The opinion of such teachers is almost unanimously that not to give attention to all the work that a pupil has done destroys his interest; that every written exercise should be carefully read; that in addition to such discussion as is possible in class there should be individual criticism of every exercise, either in writing, or orally in personal conference with the individual pupil; that about one-third of the exercises need to be rewritten, and that rewritten exercises should be re-examined.

What actually is done with manuscript varies with conditions. In some colleges, where conditions are favorable, it is all read orally in private conferences with individual students; a method satisfactory but requiring rather more time than does written criticism, since in such conferences "a student must have time to think," and the instructor "must have time to get the student's point of view." Some instructors take whatever time is necessary to read all manuscript up to 40 hours a week in high schools and 50 in colleges, supplementing this reading with class discussion and with whatever of private conference is practicable. Other instructors read but part of their manuscript, with or without the assistance of student readers, and either destroy the remainder or return it credited but unread. Others, and these greatly in the majority, endeavor to read all manuscript but with extreme haste and consequent "skimming" and "slighting." Relatively few instructors find it possible by any expenditure of time and vitality to give proper attention even to half of the exercises received.

### **How fast can themes be read?**

If the statements thus far made are true, this question and the next, relating to the physical, psychological, and optical limits of an instructor's efficiency, are peculiarly vital. The simplest and yet a most important detail is the rate at which themes may be "carefully criticised," orally or in writing. From the inquiry emerged results, averaged from the reports of more than 700 teachers, that have, it is believed, something of the certitude of a life insurance table.

Their replies averaged show that under present conditions of forced and



inefficient effort, the average reading rate for high school instructors, exclusive of about ten per cent of the most highly skilled, is approximately 2,100 words an hour, or including all instructors, 2,500 words. For college instructors, the forced rate averages 2,600 words for all instructors, or 2,300 for all but the most skilful. But if thorough work is to be done, the average reading rate for the average high school instructor is approximately 1,950 words an hour, and for the college instructor 2,200 words an hour. For rereading manuscript that has been revised and rewritten, the high school rate is 60 per cent faster than this, and the college rate 73 per cent faster. If oral conference be substituted for written criticism, the high school data show a rate for conference slightly less than for written criticism; the college data a rate approximately the same.

#### **For how many hours a day, and week, can themes be read?**

What is the duration of an instructor's efficiency when engaged in correcting and critiquing manuscript? Here also the results, based on the reports of 600 teachers, are specific and presumably accurate. For the maximum of efficiency, implying continued maintenance for an indefinitely extended period, the limit is two hours a day (college average 2.07 hours, high school average 2 hours.) For fair efficiency for a limited period this may be extended to three hours (high school 2.77, colleges 3.045); but at this rate the physical and nervous system begin to give way, on the average, in three months, and full efficiency is at an end. But under present conditions this time is exceeded in all schools. High school teachers, with a teaching schedule of from five to seven periods a day (usually six periods), read manuscript for an average of sixteen hours a week, and are then obliged to stop, leaving a considerable part of it unread. College instructor, with fewer teaching hours, read manuscript for an average of 20.6 hours a week. In high schools, 392 out of 499 teachers find it impossible by any effort to read all manuscript received. Under the somewhat more favorable conditions of the colleges, 39 colleges of 111 teachers find it impossible to read all freshman manuscript, while 6 colleges of 16 teachers are able to do so in the specified time. For various reasons 18 colleges of 92 teachers are on the right side of the average and have no serious trouble.

#### **What are the results of present actual conditions?**

The reported results of teaching composition under these conditions are as follows: Scarcely a handful of high school teachers feel that they have a reasonable chance of continuing in their work, for more than a limited period, without the sacrifice of health. As victims of "overstrain," they "break down," "collapse," "wear out," are "hopelessly weary and discouraged," are "completely exhausted," propose to "give up English," suffer from "nerves," "nervous prostration," and become "physical wrecks." Of the colleges, some of the very best testify that it is more difficult to retain instructors in English composition than in other subjects. Others report that instructors wear out, suffer from indigestion and nervous exhaustion, lose their efficiency, impair their eyesight, become the prey of shattered nerves, break down and find their way to the hospital or cemetery, because of "killing" work in English composition. These statements may seem extreme to others than composition teachers; but they are included in this report because they are made over the signatures of men and women who mean exactly what they say, and because the members of this committee can cite parallel instances from their own personal knowledge.

#### **What number of students can one teacher train with proper efficiency?**

The preceding data show by a simple computation based upon the stated averages, what are the average conditions, with respect to number of pupils,

of proper efficiency in composition teaching—conditions that can be permanently maintained. The computation is this: If a teacher can read 2,000 words an hour for two hours a day for five days a week, and if each of his pupils writes 400 words a week, that teacher can take proper care of 50 pupils. Similarly, if a teacher can read 2,200 words an hour for ten hours a week, and his pupils write 500 words a week each, that teacher can train 36 pupils. If the teacher read two additional hours on Saturday, the number of his pupils may be proportionately increased, to 60 and 43 in the respective instances. For such a number of pupils the number of teaching hours is obviously a negligible factor in the problem.

The problem must be worked out according to the individual data in each particular case. A certain class may be at a 200-word stage in its development; but for that stage the theme-reading rate is correspondingly less. To more abundant writing usually corresponds a more rapid reading, and vice versa. Independently of the preceding computation, the individual statements of 397 high school teachers, averaged, make 81 pupils the upper limit of proper assignment to a single teacher; and similarly 265 college teachers average 61 as the corresponding limit for college freshmen. In particular cases this number may or may not be too great.

If fair efficiency for a limited period is sought for, and an instructor is capable of reading at a 2,500-word rate for 15 hours a week, then at an average of 400 words a student that instructor may care for 94 students. But if it happens that the interest and enthusiasm of the students lead each to write 600 words a week, then the high pressure number for that instructor is 62 students; and according to preceding data the instructor can endure that pressure for only three months, two-thirds of a semester. In any instance in which proper efficiency is the end in view, the number of a composition teacher's recitation hours is a relatively unimportant matter; the matter of supreme importance is the number of pupils assigned him. The obvious reason is that English composition is as much a laboratory subject as is any subject of scientific or industrial training, without however requiring expensive material equipment; and with a proper number of pupils, the chief demand on the teacher's time is that of supervising laboratory practice, oral or written.

#### **How far is the proper number exceeded under present conditions?**

As to the actual number of pupils assigned to single teachers under present conditions, 530 high school teachers average 128.6 pupils each; the maximum reported is 250 pupils to a teacher, and 340 teachers report an average of 134 pupils each. In college freshman classes, 168 teachers average 104.1 pupils each; of these teachers 110 average 120 pupils each, and the maximum reported is 200 pupils.

For a high school teacher to read the themes of a class of average size writing the average amount weekly requires an average time of more than 25 hours weekly. For a college teacher under the same conditions the average time required is more than 30 hours weekly.

In both high schools and colleges, therefore, the number of pupils assigned to a single teacher is more than two and one-half times the average of proper efficiency, and more than one and one-half times the upper limit of proper efficiency. Similarly the time required is more than two and one-half times the limit of physical endurance without overstrain, and double the limit of temporary endurance at high pressure. It seems hardly necessary to look further for the causes of discouragement, failure, and nervous breakdown.

#### **What else is essential in successful work?**

Besides proper limitation of the number of pupils, composition teachers re-

gard as other essentials for successful work some other teaching besides composition—literature preferred, recognition and respect for their work by school authorities, the support and co-operation of other teachers and of school officers and administrators. They also feel that, since their work is very much heavier than that of other instructors (data page 11), they should at least have equal pay; whereas in more than 20 per cent of the schools reporting their pay is less. With all these things granted, successful teaching further requires opportunity for personal work with individual pupils, and observance of the physical limitations of time and strength. Without observance of these limitations the average teacher must be content to do inferior work, or else must maintain a high standard for a time at the sacrifice of health and future usefulness.

#### FURTHER DETAILS AS TO ACTUAL CONDITIONS.

While the preceding questions are the principal ones that the committee set itself to investigate, many others were included for the sake of greater completeness of detail, and additional matter of importance developed as the work went on. From this point on, the replies to the remaining questions of the circular of inquiry will be presented in summary.

#### What is done with excess manuscript that cannot be read?

Answers:—Skim it mostly; 33 high schools, 19 colleges.

Credit it unread; 10 high schools, 9 colleges.

Destroy it; 19 high schools, 3 colleges.

Some high schools use it in general class discussion.

Some colleges turn it over to "readers;" cheap help employed by the college, or by the instructor at his own cost (see data page 11 following.)

#### On what is the stress placed in criticising manuscript?

Answers, in summary:—In all schools the stress is placed heavily on spelling, punctuation, and sentence form; more lightly on paragraphing; more lightly still on general structure; least on artistic qualities and almost as little on personal qualities, though here the colleges do a little better than the high schools.

#### What is your estimate of a year's work in theme reading, and in writing corrections and criticisms, for a single instructor?

Answers.—Theme reading average of high school instructors, 1,570,000 words a year.

Theme reading of college instructors, 1,568,000 words a year.

Writing average of high school instructors, 133,000 words.

Writing average of college instructors, 100,350 words.

#### Is the work of composition teaching unduly or unfairly burdensome?

Answer.—Yes, 594 teachers; colleges 193, high schools 401.

No, 147 teachers; colleges 90, high schools 47.

#### Can you obtain satisfactory results?

Answers:—No, 432 teachers; colleges 153, high schools 279.

Yes, 267 teachers; colleges 116, high schools 151.

Almost all affirmative answers are qualified with the statement that the work done is "as satisfactory as could be expected under the circumstances," and are therefore in effect negative.

#### If results are not satisfactory, why not?

High school answers:—Because of overwork, large classes, lack of time and strength for necessary theme reading.

College answers:—The same reasons; and in addition, lack of preparation of

students, lax ideals and lack of respect for English in the college itself, lack of opportunity for conferences with students, lack of co-operation by other instructors, and careless or inconvincible attitude of authorities.

**What are the proper conditions for efficient and successful work?**

Answers in round numbers, including some points already stated:—Number of pupils to a teacher in high schools not to exceed 80, in colleges 60. Number in a section, 20. Number of recitations weekly, 3 or 4 for each section. Proportion of oral to written exercises, 50 per cent each. Average number of written words weekly from each student, high schools 400 to 450; colleges 650 to 700. All to be criticised with the utmost thoroughness, either orally or in writing; if the latter, 50 to 75 per cent of the criticisms to be fully written, the rest indicated with symbols. About 30 per cent of the exercises, the most defective, to be rewritten and reread, carefully with the pupil or hastily for verification, according to circumstances. Individual consultations, by testimony of all but three schools, should be held at least as often as every two or three weeks with pupils that need them, and average 15 minutes in length (range from one minute to one hour). For such consultations, in addition to the time specified for theme reading, a high school instructor should have 5 hours weekly and a college instructor 6 or 7; all provided and allowed for in the teaching schedule, but the proportion of consultation to reading time to be governed by circumstances such as the needs of individual pupils.

**Should a composition teacher teach composition exclusively?**

Answers:—No; 71 high schools and 51 colleges.

Yes; 5 high schools and 10 colleges.

It depends; 2 colleges.

**What allowance if any is made in your school for manuscript reading and conference?**

Answers:—In 43 high schools out of 68, and 31 colleges out of 44 reporting on this point, none at all. That is, in about 70 per cent of the schools reporting, such labor is in addition to a full assignment of class-room duty and is not counted or recognized in any way whatever. This is the labor which, as shown by preceding data, averages from 16 to 20 hours a week for all composition instructors, often extending to 40 or even 50 hours, which is essential to efficient teaching, and in excess of 10 hours a week of reading and 5 of conference is insupportable for more than a limited period.

**If allowance is made for theme reading, what is that allowance?**

Answers:—In the high schools in which any allowance is made for theme reading, the average allowance is one period a day or five periods a week, counted as teaching time. This is an allowance of less than five hours, while the work to be done, as shown by preceding data, actually consumes 16 hours on the average, and would require more than 25 hours, under average conditions, if it were fully performed. In colleges, the average allowance made for theme reading and conference is to count 3 hours of such work equivalent to 1 hour of teaching.

**Is the allowance, if any, a fair one; and if not, what would be fair?**

Answers:—The average allowance stated is not fair, because entirely insufficient for the work to be done, and because the mental and physical strain of theme reading in excess seems greater than that of teaching. According to the average of 165 high school teachers reporting, a fair allowance for theme reading in high school would be two periods a day deducted from teaching, with corresponding essential reduction in size of classes; and according to the average reports of 97 college instructors, 1.67 hours of reading and conference

should be counted equivalent to one hour of teaching. (In applying these suggestions, it is of course necessary to recall that but a limited number of hours a day can be efficiently spent in theme reading.)

**How does the labor of composition teachers compare with that of teachers of other subjects?**

Answers:—It is always much heavier, sometimes incredibly heavier, often extending to more than three times the hours of absolutely necessary duty, even when teaching hours are fewer, and not counting for either subject the time for preparation of lessons. Most of the answers to this question were in general terms, but the average of the specific answers makes the proportion of English composition labor to that of other instructors, with the occasional exception of science, 1.75 to 1. (See supplementary report, page 16.)

**What as to status and pay of English composition teachers?**

Answers:—A large proportion of the composition teachers reporting are dissatisfied and decline to regard their profession as a permanent one. In all, 105 college teachers and 220 high school teachers frankly confess discouragement; while, usually in larger schools, 124 college teachers and 207 high school teachers express intention to remain in their work, with such qualifications as the following; "I have a better place in view;" "My classes happen to be small;" "I refuse to overwork, slighting my duties if necessary;" "I like my work, even if it is hard;" "I have been trained for this work and can do nothing else, hence am helpless to change;" "The work has compensations;" "We hope for better things." The more cheerful replies usually come from teachers who are by good fortune well on the right side of the average of present conditions. Finally, in 13 colleges out of 58 and 17 high schools out of 82, English teachers are paid less than other teachers, in no case more; and in some schools it is explained that English teachers are as a class regarded as inferior to others.

---

#### DETAILS RELATING TO COLLEGES ONLY.

**What class of instructors should teach freshmen?**

Answers:—Best instructors in the department, 41 colleges.  
All the instructors in department, 5 colleges.  
The best young men, 2 colleges.  
The best young men under senior direction, 2 colleges.  
Instructors who are "interested," 1 college.  
It depends on circumstances, 1 college.

As to actual conditions, in 43 colleges freshman composition is taught by 1 dean, 3 department heads, 29 professors, 6 associate professors, 30 assistant professors, 26 instructors, and 2 tutors. In 6 colleges, all English instructors teach freshman composition.

**Is it well to employ "manuscript readers" or "cheap help?"**

Answers:—49 colleges of 179 teachers think it well to employ them.  
19 colleges of 86 teachers prefer to leave themes unread.  
As to actual conditions, 36 colleges, 144 teachers, employ manuscript readers, while 17 colleges, 77 teachers, instead of doing so leave part of the work undone. 15 colleges, 48 teachers, manage to do it all without cheap help, usually by overworking the regular instructors.

**What is the degree of efficiency of manuscript readers when employed?**

Answers:—About 25 per cent show little efficiency, 50 per cent fair, and 25 per cent high. 11 colleges of 58 teachers have found readers that are completely satisfactory; 23 colleges of 96 teachers have failed to do so.

### What are they paid, and how much are they worth?

Answers:—6 schools pay them by tuition, 11 by salary; in 9 they are employed at the expense of individual instructors. Pay by the hour ranges from 15 cents to \$1, averaging about 32 cents; pay by salary ranges from \$30 to \$300 a year, averaging about \$150. In the opinion of 23 schools of 93 teachers, such readers are worth what they cost; 7 schools of 18 teachers think not. The reports seem to show on the whole that "cheap help" is not necessarily worthless because it is cheap; that on the average it is preferable to employ such help rather than to leave work undone; that in proportion to their pay and their preparation and the care exercised in selecting them, manuscript readers are as useful in their place as are other instructors; but that to substitute a cheaper for a higher grade of instruction is undesirable.

---

## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

### SUMMARY.

The present inquiry concerned itself with two principal questions only, and the results arrived at are in substance as follows:

1. In secondary schools, English costs less than any other subject in proportion to the number of pupils taking it; and the unit teaching cost of one pupil for one year is almost exactly seven dollars.

2. The average number of pupils assigned to an English teacher is greater than in any other subject; mathematics and history approaching English most nearly.

3. In proportion to the number of teachers, the labor of teaching English in secondary schools is greater than that of any other subject, even when high efficiency is necessarily sacrificed in order to lessen that labor.

## REMOVING AN INCUBUS

At the third annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, which was held in Chicago, November 27 to 29, a series of resolutions offered by Professor Edwin M. Hopkins of the University of Kansas was unanimously adopted. Professor Hopkins, who has been for some years chairman of the Joint Committee of the Modern Language Association and the National Council on the Labor and Cost of English Teaching, stated that investigations of the Committee show beyond any doubt that satisfactory work in the teaching of English composition cannot be done so long as secondary schools and colleges assign too many pupils to the teacher. The average at present is over 125 in secondary schools and over 100 in colleges. The number could be considerably reduced without raising the cost of English teaching to the level of most of the other subjects.

The resolutions, which were passed without a dissenting voice, are as follows:

### I

The National Council of Teachers of English approves the steps taken by the North Central Association to limit and decrease the number of pupils assigned to English teachers in high schools, and requests the Association and all similar accrediting bodies to recommend for immediate action that schools in which the maximum number of pupils assigned to a single English teacher exceeds 100 be not accredited in English; and it also requests the Association and all similar accrediting bodies to take further action at as early a date as seems expedient to reduce this maximum to 80, with due provision, as at present recommended, for necessary time for conference and theme reading counted as teaching time.

### II

It is the sense of the National Council of Teachers of English that in order to secure satisfactory results in college English it is essential that the maximum number of students in Freshman English Composition assigned to a single instructor should in no case exceed 60; and that when such an instructor has classes in other subjects, a corresponding reduction should be made in the number of pupils assigned him in English composition.

In support of these resolutions Professor Hopkins said that the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools has under consideration the adoption of a rule that no school in its territory shall be accredited in English if the maximum number of pupils assigned to a single teacher of English exceeds five classes of 25 pupils each. The teachers' associations in two states, New York and Wisconsin, have recently requested that such a maximum shall not exceed 100.

Over 25,000 copies of the report of the Hopkins Committee have been distributed, and the Bureau of Education is about to issue a bulletin setting forth the facts. Nothing has given so much encouragement to those who are aware of the real situation as the warm response which has been made to the appeal which this report embodies.

Those who wish further information concerning the work of this committee should communicate with Professor E. M. Hopkins, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

### What are they paid, and how much are they worth?

Answers:—6 schools pay them by tuition, 11 by salary; in 9 they are employed at the expense of individual instructors. Pay by the hour ranges from 15 cents to \$1, averaging about 32 cents; pay by salary ranges from \$30 to \$300 a year, averaging about \$150. In the opinion of 23 schools of 93 teachers, such readers are worth what they cost; 7 schools of 18 teachers think not. The reports seem to show on the whole that "cheap help" is not necessarily worthless because it is cheap; that on the average it is preferable to employ such help rather than to leave work undone; that in proportion to their pay and their preparation and the care exercised in selecting them, manuscript readers are as useful in their place as are other instructors; but that to substitute a cheaper for a higher grade of instruction is undesirable.

---

## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

### SUMMARY.

The present inquiry concerned itself with two principal questions only, and the results arrived at are in substance as follows:

1. In secondary schools, English costs less than any other subject in proportion to the number of pupils taking it; and the unit teaching cost of one pupil for one year is almost exactly seven dollars.

2. The average number of pupils assigned to an English teacher is greater than in any other subject; mathematics and history approaching English most nearly.

3. In proportion to the number of teachers, the labor of teaching English in secondary schools is greater than that of any other subject, even when high efficiency is necessarily sacrificed in order to lessen that labor.



## INFORMATION OBTAINED AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE PRELIMINARY REPORT.

### General details of action taken.

From April 1911 to November 1911 were published and distributed eight editions numbering twelve thousand copies of the preliminary report of the committee, with the general request that readers would furnish the committee further information in corroboration or correction of the statements of the report, and answer two additional questions, relating to the comparative cost and comparative labor of teaching English and other subjects. Replies were comparatively few, and gave corroboration rather than additional information. Results were compiled from these, from material furnished by teachers' organizations and from the school reports of several states, but were still insufficient to justify the presentation of a final report. An investigator of the cost of equipment of English and other teaching, Professor V. C. Coulter, was invited to act with the original committee, and the work of the body thus enlarged was endorsed by the National Council of Teachers of English at its Chicago meeting, December 1, 1911. A report of progress was made at the Chicago meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1911, which also adopted resolutions of endorsement, and assumed all the expenses incurred by the committee to that date. Further endorsements have since been given by the English Section of the Schoolmasters' Club of Michigan, March 29, 1912, the N. E. A. departments of Higher Education, Normal Schools, and Secondary Education, July 11, 1912, and the Executive Committee of the N. E. A., October 23, 1912; and each endorsement recommends the completed report to the attention of the United States Bureau of Education with reference to possible final publication and general distribution.

To secure more adequate data for its final report, the committee prepared another specific questionnaire on the comparative cost and comparative labor of English and other teaching, and on the comparative cost of teaching equipment for English and other subjects. Copies of this were sent out as an insert in the first number of the English Journal, published January 15, 1912; and additional copies were distributed to representative high schools in each state through the courtesy of state superintendents and of high school inspectors. A summary of results was presented to the National Council of Teachers of English at Chicago, November 30, 1912, and to the English Section of the Modern Language Association at Indianapolis, December 27, 1912.

At the last named meeting, the committee, which for one year had been acting jointly for the Council and the Association, was continued with the request that it gather further data relating to the comparative cost of teaching English and other subjects in colleges, and in other matters place itself under the authority of the Council or its Executive Committee. In response to this request, the committee immediately sent out one hundred letters to representative colleges, asking for the data above named; and reported to the Executive Committee of the Council for further instructions. That Committee recommended that the membership of the English Commit-

tee be increased, and that its work be extended to include the study of the conditions and the teaching efficiency of the lower schools.

In June, 1913, the Bureau of Education approved the report and the further plans of the committee, appointed its chairman a special collaborator, and authorized the proposed extension of the work with a view to the ultimate publication of results as a Bureau bulletin or series of bulletins, the first of which may be ready in the fall of 1914. See page 4.

For the present report, the chairman has prepared the tabulations relating to relative teaching cost and labor of various subjects, and Professor V. C. Coulter those relating to equipment cost; each with such assistance as was available.

#### **Number and distribution of replies received.**

To the general questions of the preliminary report, of which 15,000 copies in all were distributed, only about forty replies were received, and these chiefly from one state, in which the report was followed with special letters to certain schools. To the special questionnaire later prepared, of which more than 3,000 copies were sent out, were received 130 replies, and as these were especially complete and detailed, they constitute the principal basis of the results herein stated. Besides these, in two states special state investigations were made, in one instance including 91 schools and in the other 74, and these have been used for correction and confirmation wherever possible. While above 330 schools in all have been heard from, many replies have been so incomplete or so obviously erroneous that the conclusions of the report for the most part rest upon a much smaller number, indicated in connection with each point presented. As to size, 187 schools average 10.85 teachers each; an average that is probably a little too high for the entire 330.

In the distribution of the replies, 24 states were represented, chiefly those of the Middle West. From the Eastern states and as far south as Maryland there is a fairly strong showing. Outside of the general territory thus indicated replies are comparatively few and scattering.

#### **The teaching cost of high school subjects.**

The data in hand are somewhat more conclusive as to the relative than the absolute teaching cost of secondary school subjects; but almost every report received includes a statement as to the cost of English teaching, even when the size of the school is not indicated. It is believed therefore that the stated average cost of teaching English to one pupil for one year, based upon about 250 reports from schools of all sizes but fairly representative of the proportions generally obtaining, may be regarded as fairly indicating the unit cost for the entire country. For all the schools reporting, the average is just above seven dollars; with the omission of a very small percentage of extreme cases it is just below seven dollars; hence seven dollars seems to be the mean or limit, toward which all reports have tended from the beginning. Figures for other subjects are usually and necessarily based upon a much smaller number of reports than are those for English.

The data in this table to some extent overlap those of Professor Coulter, and include certain reports which he has not as yet had opportunity to pass upon; but the results are in such substantial agreement that both tables are printed, till such time as they can be averaged together.

Subject	Number of schools included in estimate	Average annual teaching cost, each pupil.
English	235	\$7.05
Latin	191	9.49
German	156	10.02
Mathematics	188	8.08
History	182	8.03
Physics	153	13.71
Chemistry	108	17.20
Botany	146	8.56
Domestic Science	75	9.50
Manual Training	89	15.19
Commercial	116	10.74
Preceding scientific subjects combined	167	11.74
Preceding vocational subjects combined	128	11.98

**Average number of pupils assigned to a teacher in each subject.**

In the preliminary report of this committee, the average number of pupils for each of more than a thousand English teachers was found to be 128.6. Later and entirely independent data from 500 additional teachers give an average of 122. The average of all the data in the committee's hands, from between 1500 and 2000 English teachers, shows 126.4 pupils for each teacher. The relative number for other subjects, based on the most recently received reports, is here shown.

Subject	Number of Schools reporting	Average number of teachers in each school	Average number of pupils for one teacher.
English	228	2.00	122
Latin	207	1.09	82
German	154	.95	90
Mathematics	185	1.81	110
History	193	1.15	107
Physics	159	.54	72
Chemistry	114	.49	63
Botany	143	.49	84
Domestic Science	75	1.09	85
Manual Training	89	1.32	74
Commercial	116	1.37	96

**Total number of pupils enrolled in each subject, stated relatively, in percentages.**

Under this head, the committee has endeavored merely to discover the general relations as indicated in a few state reports, in order that it might form an incidental and conjectural opinion as to the probable relative total teaching cost of each secondary school subject. The few reports examined were found to be not far apart with respect to the relative school attendance in each subject; and the proportions thus ascertained were as follows: If English be called the unit or 100 per cent, that of Latin is about 49, German 26, Mathematics 80, History 57, Science (all subjects) about 58.

### Relative total teaching cost of each subject, in percentages.

If the preceding statement be regarded as approximately correct, the total teaching cost of each subject, stated in relative percentages, is as follows: English 100, Latin 65.66, German 36.92, Mathematics 91.2, History 64.41, Science 96.28. This and the preceding statement, while merely illustrative, are probably not far from the truth.

Relative annual cost of English and Science for each pupil, including equipment; and relative total annual cost for each subject.

The average annual increase in equipment for each pupil in English seems to lie between 20 and 25 cents; that for all scientific subjects between \$1.50 and \$2.50. Assuming the lowest figures for each, the ratio of annual cost of English for each pupil is to the corresponding cost for Science as 100 to 182.6. On the same basis, the total annual budget for English in one year would be to the Science budget as 100 to 105.9.

All figures thus far presented have been continually revised and re-revised for more than a year, as additional reports have been received; but while the figures themselves have been changed at each revision, none of those changes has modified in any essential particular their general character and significance.

### Relative labor of teaching high school subjects.

Under this head a large proportion of the reports received were blank, and only a few were complete and accurate enough to be of service. A first rough tabulation indicated that English, science, and history, and possibly German, require more time of a teacher than do other high school subjects; but to determine the relative demand of these and other subjects proved difficult because of the insufficient data, especially in the case of scientific and vocational subjects. The general results arrived at, while in themselves inconclusive, are corroborated in some particulars by those of the preliminary report, and in particular in showing that English is the heaviest subject of all. But they also seem to indicate that English teachers under average conditions are justly declining to undertake the physical impossibility of maintaining a higher standard of efficiency under those conditions, and are simply doing "the best that can be done under the circumstances"; which according to the figures below means about two hours a day of theme reading and one of consultation, or twenty-five per cent more than is required for similar purposes by any other subject; whereas the highest efficiency might require one hundred and fifty per cent more, as shown in the preliminary report.

Subject	No. Schools	Av. No. Teachers in Each	Av. No. Classes in Each	Av. No. Classes Each Teacher
English	54	2.49	12.83	5.15
Latin	49	1.16	6.26	5.40
German	40	1.02	5.59	5.45
Mathematics	52	2.03	10.08	5.32
History	46	1.29	7.11	5.51
Physics	11	.39	1.9	4.87
Chemistry	35	.62	2.28	3.67
Botany	9	.29	1.55	5.34
Domestic Science	6	.67	3.83	5.71
Manual Training	7	.67	4.00	5.97
Commercial	28	2.31	12.83	5.15

Subject	Recitation and Lab. Pds. W'kly	Assembly and Consultation	Themes, Exams. & Reports Hrs. W'kly
English	26.46	6.87	9.62
Latin	26.42	5.9	5.8
German	26.68	5.6	7.00
Mathematics	26.59	6.59	5.22
History	26.34	6.42	6.10
Physics	26.50	5.60	6.00
Chemistry	25.45	5.43	6.60
Botany	26.56	5.00	7.14
Domestic Science	25.32	6.9	6.29
Manual Training	26.03	5.06	3.62
Commercial	26.9	5.28	5.98

Subject	Preparation and Other Necessary Labor	Approx. Total Hrs. Weekly	Total Hrs. not Includ- ing Preparation
English	10.23	47.63	37.40
Latin	7.98	40.16	32.18
German	7.92	41.20	33.28
Mathematics	6.18	39.06	32.88
History	10.28	43.68	33.40
Physics	10.57	43.33	32.76
Chemistry	11.62	43.96	32.34
Botany	9.62	43.06	33.45
Domestic Science	8.72	41.86	33.14
Manual Training	9.33	38.86	29.50
Commercial	6.73	38.85	32.12

#### Relative cost of teaching college subjects.

This part of the investigation was not begun till requested at the Indianapolis meeting of December 27, 1912. As a tentative beginning 100 letters were sent out January 30. To these 33 replies have been received, 15 stating that the desired information cannot easily be given, the others either sending some part of it or promising it as soon as possible. While the material thus far received is entirely insufficient for the intended purpose, the individual reports are so interesting that a digest of twelve of them is subjoined. These reports represent colleges of all sizes; four of the largest universities, four smaller colleges, and four of intermediate rank and importance; and the figures in each instance are estimates of the cost of each subject for each student taking it one hour a week for a semester. It is hoped ultimately to determine proportions and relative percentages, rather than specific units.

College	English	Math.	History	Latin	German	Physics	Botany	Chem.
I	\$2.60	\$2.90	\$2.89	\$4.34	\$2.70	\$3.88	\$6.16	\$4.77
II	1.29	.73	1.78	1.17	.42	.68	1.68	
III	2.96	1.63	1.11	2.63	.88	10.18	5.71	4.46
IV	.88	.67	.61	1.59	.75	4.67	.59	1.03
V	1.48	.66	1.00	4.11	1.37	4.21		.90
VI	23.80	3.56	7.80	4.46	20.82	3.00		4.00
VII	.40	.81	.71	1.14	1.16	6.58		1.81
VIII	.96	6.29	1.42	25.13	2.64	8.98	12.87	3.92
IX	.72	1.24	.72			5.12		
X	1.79	1.68	1.66		2.48	3.39		3.58
XI	1.75	7.16	2.43	3.50	3.00	9.11		.84
XII	2.06	2.12	1.53	3.56	2.17	3.65	5.25	3.58
Aver.	1.53 3.39	2.45	2.15	2.94 5.16	1.75 3.49	5.28	5.37	2.88

Figures in black face in statements VI and VIII seem abnormally large in comparison, and are not included in the first averages given; but the result of inclusion is shown immediately below. If those figures are omitted, the results except as to chemistry correspond in a general way to those obtained for secondary schools; and the order of cost is—English, German, History, Mathematics, Chemistry, Latin, Physics, and Botany. Four of these colleges, Nos. I, VI, VIII, and IX, express dissatisfaction with the present status and results of their English work. Three colleges, two of them not included in the preceding list, furnish accurate statements of the cost of Freshman Rhetoric; and the average of the three is 1.52. The most expensive subject is in six colleges Physics, in two Botany, in one Chemistry, in one History, and in one each Latin and English: the figures in the last two cases being questionable. The least expensive subject is in four colleges English (the same as History in one case), in three History, in two German, and in one each Mathematics, Botany, Physics, and Chemistry. These results are here presented merely because of their incidental interest, and not as justifying any conclusions whatever; the work must be continued and extended.

#### Relative equipment cost of high school subjects. (V. C. Coulter.)

The tables and charts given here show the present teaching cost and equipment value per pupil enrolled in each of the subjects usually taught in the secondary school. Statistics similar to these have been compiled for various groups of schools in different states several times during the last five years. The results have been practically uniform, and the addition of any considerable group of schools has made little difference in the results. This indicates the general validity of the figures here given. The reports upon which the present tabulations have been based have come in during the present year, and none of the older figures have been used.

Table I shows the general averages. But the other tables are more significant since they show something of the distribution of teaching cost and equipment value.

Table IV indicates what the reports fully prove, that there is no uniform ratio between the expenditures for the various subjects, that the present situation is merely the result of the whim of individual school officials.

In view of the established inadequacy of the present teaching force in

English, and the almost universal lack of equipment, it is pertinent to call attention to the comparatively small amount of money spent for that subject. Attention may also be called to the small number of schools reporting work in agriculture and physiology, and to the small amount of money spent for the latter subject.

The present persistent demand for standardization of content, of methods and of grading, seems not to have considered the condition of the schools indicated by these figures. There can be no standardization in a school in which one department is 100 per cent more efficiently equipped and manned than another. The present situation calls loudly for a careful statement of curricula content values, and an apportionment of money among the various elements according to their needs.

TABLE I.

Subject	No. Schools Reporting Teaching Cost	Teaching Cost per Pupil	No. Schools Reporting Equipment	Equip. Value per Pupil	Av. Annual Equipment Increase
English	162	\$7.14	112	\$2.76	\$0.21
Latin	140	8.11	55	1.62	0.09
German	115	10.86	53	1.28	0.12
Mathematics	130	8.28	52	0.75	0.08
History	124	7.70	79	2.06	0.18
Physics	95	12.59	63	19.71	1.30
Chemistry	84	14.98	58	23.49	1.44
*Biology	86	9.17	64	9.02	0.69
Phy. Geo.	29	7.04	15	8.66	0.56
Agriculture	9	15.40	5	10.75	4.50
Physiology	12	6.10	6	4.02	0.23
†Combined Science	110	10.75	80	13.84	0.92
Dom. Art & Science	58	7.95	46	10.24	0.46
Manual Tr.	68	13.12	48	26.25	1.00
Commercial	90	10.22	38	4.45	0.33
Comb. Voc. Sub.		10.37		12.28	0.55
French	27	9.84	10	1.75	0.06

\*Sometimes reported biology, sometimes botany, sometimes botany and zoology.

†This item is not a combination of the science subjects above. Many schools reported only for the combined sciences, and they are included in these averages.

TABLE II

17	58	56	34	32	85	72	39	23	43	48
Eng.	Lat.	Ger.	Math.	Hist.	Phy.	Chem.	Bot.	D.S.	M.T.	Com.
92	48	45	75	73	23	13	52	23	17	25

This table is made by taking the approximate median of the teaching cost per pupil for all subjects as given in Table III, and showing the number of schools with a teaching cost above, and the number with a teaching cost below. That is, 17 schools have a teaching cost per pupil in English above the general median, and 92 below.

TABLE III

Distribution of annual teaching cost per pupil.

Tch'g Cost per Pupil	Eng.	Latin	Ger.	Math.	Hist.	Phys.	Chem.	Bot.	D. S.	M. T.	Com.
0-\$4	5	4	5	3	7	1	1	13	3	3	1
4-5	15	3	6	1	9	3	1	9	3	1	
5-6	22	10	9	18	17	3		7	6	3	7
6-7	25	6	8	17	16	5	3	6	3	5	2
7-8	14	10	11	18	14	1	4	11	6		7
8-9	11	15	6	18	10	10	4	6	2	5	8
9-10	7	13	12	8	11	5	4	4		1	3
10-11	4	11	8	7	10	8	5	6	5	8	11
11-12	3	8	7	4	5	7	6	4	3	5	5
12-13	2	4	8	3		8	13	10	6	6	3
13-14	1	6	2	3	2	3	2	5	2	4	5
14-15		7	5	2			4		2		3
15-16		4		1	1	10	5	2	3	2	1
16-17		1	6		1	18	1	2			2
17-18			1			4	2	1		4	1
18-19		2	1	2		2	6	1		2	1
19-20		1		1		1				1	
20-21			3			3	1	2		1	1
Over \$22		1	3	3	2	16	23	2	2	9	12
Total	109	106	101	109	105	108	85	91	46	60	73

This table shows the number of schools reporting teaching cost per pupil in the various subjects from \$4 to \$22. There are 5 schools with a cost for English of less than \$4, 15 with a cost of from \$4 to \$5, etc.

The black type and the heavy lines in the various columns represent the approximate median above and below which there are an equal number of schools.

TABLE IV

Distribution of equipment value per pupil in English, Physics, and Chemistry.

No. Schools	Equip. Value per Pupil in English	Equip. Value per Pupil in Physics	Equip. Value per Pupil in Chemistry
6	\$0.06 to \$0.68	\$5.04 to \$61.54	\$1.50 to \$20.00
5	1.01 to 1.45	10.72 to 62.10	1.37 to 190.45
4	2.10 to 2.73	13.16 to 25.00	15.00 to 77.45
5	3.00 to 3.60	5.00 to 66.66	5.90 to 64.71
3	4.63 to 8.00	23.42 to 85.00	13.84 to 55.00

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS.

While the object of the committee has been solely to ascertain and make public certain facts, it has repeatedly been requested to make those facts the basis of formal recommendations, and in particular to suggest an ideal



reorganization of the high school course in English. As such a reorganization must affect all secondary school subjects directly or indirectly, and be to some extent dependent on individual conditions, it presents independent problems, the study of which has now been undertaken by a special committee of the National Education Association including a sub-committee on English under the chairmanship of the secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English. But though every question answered in the reports of the present committee suggests many others that require further investigation, the work has led to a number of conclusions with regard to the proper organization of a secondary school English course; and a brief summary of the principal findings may be made as follows:

First, and most conclusively established, the initial step toward increasing the efficiency of English composition teaching, the one thing that is essential in all cases, whatever else may prove to be necessary, is to reduce the average number of pupils assigned to English composition teachers in all schools to a proper laboratory standard. The reason why this reduction is the initial step toward higher efficiency, and in all cases the essential step, is because, no matter how favorable other conditions may be, without this reduction high efficiency is a physical impossibility. The general average and the upper limit of that standard for colleges and secondary schools have been shown in the committee's report.

Second, the cost of taking this step will not be prohibitive; it will merely give English composition, adjudged the most important of all laboratory subjects, its proper place among such subjects in the school budget, as any scientific system of standardization must do. Now it stands at the very bottom, worst paid and worst equipped of all if not the last considered, relegated to the company of text-book subjects and without financial honor even among them. Full recognition will not make it the most expensive subject, because it requires, not elaborate buildings and apparatus, but merely an adequate supply of books and teachers, with simple illustrative material.

Third, after this step is taken, others may then prove to be necessary in some cases: such as (a) the standardizing of the preparation and the skill of English teachers; (b) the determining of the relative efficiency of various methods under varying conditions, as for instance of oral and written training; (c) the establishing of the definite and required cooperation of other teachers with English teachers; and (d) the coordinating of the English work of all schools from the lowest to the highest. But with the present average assignment of pupils, it is established that the best teacher using the best methods cannot secure high efficiency, except by overwork with its inevitable results, and even thus for a limited period only. It may for emphasis be repeated that the thing that chiefly matters in the teaching of English composition is not the number or the size of individual classes, but as in any other laboratory subject, the total number of students assigned to a teacher; though incidentally within certain limits smaller classes are preferable to larger ones, even for efficient teachers.

In the progress of the investigation, further details appear to be sanctioned by the opinions of a majority of teachers reporting. For instance, in secondary schools English schedule time should be about equally divided between literature and composition, both subjects preferably taught by the same teacher to the same pupils. A prevailing practice is to give composi-

tion two days a week and literature three; but exceptions are numerous. Laboratory practice it is said should be about equally divided between oral and written work; not necessarily both in the same week, but with a certain weekly average minimum of written work. Composition sections should not exceed 20 students each, and a smaller number is preferable, especially in oral training. Ample time should be provided for private personal conference between instructor and pupils, for both oral and written work, all counted and paid for as teaching time, thus greatly lessening the necessity and labor of theme correcting, and increasing efficiency by a ratio greatly exceeding the necessary increase in cost.

Without enumerating other topics which necessarily will be fully and authoritatively covered in the forthcoming report of the N. E. A. committee, it will be noted that even the few points stated raise further questions of the utmost importance, to which answers cannot be found too soon. Perhaps the most pressing of these is the question as to the relative time necessary in oral and written training respectively to obtain fairly equivalent results in each. Each serves its own ends, and neither can be replaced by the other, but each aids the other in certain respects. This question has a most important bearing upon the problems of labor and cost discussed in this report. So far as it can be answered by a consensus of opinion, the answer is almost unanimous that oral training takes more time, while of course greatly lessening the burden of theme correction. English teachers' associations in two states are now making a special study of this problem; in one instance making a comparative study of the conditions as they are found, and in the other conducting a carefully organized experimental test. A fairly definite and conclusive answer may therefore be expected within a reasonable time.

Another question that must some time be answered, and the sooner the better, is that relating to the feasibility of requiring the cooperation in all schools of all other teachers with the teachers of English, and the nature of the results that may be expected. It seems plausible if not indeed probable that after establishing ideal conditions of efficiency in the English classroom, the influence of other classes, the playground, the street, and the home, may after all by mere preponderance of time largely nullify the English teacher's work. While it is true that they cannot under improved conditions nullify it in the same measure that they now do, and that it may be possible to secure high efficiency in spite of them, it is also true that the facts should be ascertained and passed upon. An organized effort to do so has not yet been made, though there have been a few individual experiments. Those in which cooperation was occasional and purely voluntary seem invariably to have failed; and so have those in which the English of other classes was passed on and graded by the English teacher; because in neither have other teachers assumed real responsibility. But in one experiment now in progress in a secondary school, it is made a part of the regular duty of all other teachers to supervise the English of their classes according to specific and simple instructions, whatever the subject may be, and to report grades on English to the English department, to be taken into account in the final English estimate. This experiment promises to be successful; it has been in operation long enough to demonstrate that it produces very apparent good results in English without increasing expense in other departments.

The same school has found an even more marked improvement in results to follow from reducing the total number of students assigned to an English teacher in accordance with the data published by this committee. This number varies from 60 to 50; each teacher averages not more than 17 recitations weekly, and spends 12 to 15 hours weekly in private conference with pupils and 5 hours in theme reading. The proportion of oral to written exercises is 5 to 1; written exercises average 300 words a week for each pupil, and delivery of oral exercises requires 10 or 15 minutes a week from each pupil. To introduce the system increased the previous cost of teaching not above 25 per cent, while the number of failures compared with that of neighboring schools in the same period has been reduced one half. This in general terms is to say that with regard to one single point, an increase of not to exceed 25 per cent in expense has led to an increase of 100 per cent in efficiency.\*

Two other investigations intimately related to those discussed in this report are now being undertaken under the direction of the National Council of Teachers of English. One of these relates to the proper preparation and equipment of English teachers of all schools; the other to the comparative cost and other conditions of the English work of the lower schools. From the beginning of the present movement to find the reasons for the present unsatisfactory educational situation in English, it has seemed probable that in the lower schools exists the greatest need of all for improvement of conditions; and that if proper reorganization could there be brought about, the English problems of the higher schools would be greatly simplified; but so great and so complicated is the problem presented by the lower schools that it has hitherto been passed over. It is now proposed to approach it, under the general supervision of the Council, through affiliated organizations everywhere; and the present committee has been continued and enlarged for this special purpose: individual members of the committee to take charge of specific parts of the work after a general plan is formulated and approved. Also further report remains to be made on the comparative cost of teaching college subjects. For the membership of the enlarged committee, and other details, see page 4.

Questions, criticisms, suggestions, and information of any sort relating to work that has been done, is to be done, or ought to be done, will as heretofore be welcomed by the committee. It wishes to express its appreciation of the help of many earnest co-workers, its desire for further assistance, and its hope that, through the general recognition of conditions necessary to good results, there may be established in all schools a high and general efficiency in English teaching.

---

\*The school referred to, here named by permission, is the J. Sterling Morton High School of Cicero, Illinois, Principal H. V. Church. The following statement regarding its English work is quoted from the letter of a recent visitor: "I never saw the like before in any school. No doubt a similar condition might be found in some high grade private schools, but this is a public high school, in a community largely inhabited by foreigners, a school in which few of the pupils come from wealthy families \* \* \* \*. It is the system beyond all question, which has produced the results." In introducing the "system" Mr. Church has had the effective support and approval of all his teachers; of other subjects as well as of English. See report in English Journal for March, 1913, page 185.

14 DAY USE  
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

**LOAN DEPT.**

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or  
on the date to which renewed.

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

17 JUL 59

REC'D LD

AUG 13 1959

LD 21A-50m-4, '59  
(A1724s10)476B

General Library  
University of California  
Berkeley

GAYLAMOUNT  
PAMPHLET BINDER



*Manufactured by*  
GAYLORD BROS. Inc.  
Syracuse, N. Y.  
Stockton, Calif.

YC 56871

